

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

LUKE 14:16-24.

Contents:

The Great Supper and the guests.

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Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

1. The Papists, contrary to the order of the ancient Church, have appointed this Gospel lesson for the first Sunday after Trinity, because they celebrated it the week during the festival of Corpus Christi, as is still the custom among them. For they interpreted the supper, of which this Gospel speaks, to signify the Sacrament of the Altar, and thereby desired to establish the Communion in one part or form only, which, as you well know, is one of their chief abuses and an anti-Christian perversion of this sacrament, concerning which we do not agree with them.

2. Inasmuch as young people are growing up and know nothing about such festivals or pompous demonstrations, and as we older persons forget it also, it is well to remind our people, so that, when our youth come to their churches and see such things, they may not be offended, but may be able to say: That it is not right, that they should play with the holy Sacrament and carry it about, in order thereby to dispense so many false indulgences, not with the intention thereby to honor the Sacrament, for then they would have carried about the entire Sacrament, or both elements, bread and wine. But to the shame and disgrace of the Sacrament, they do this that they themselves may thereby be honored, namely, that the distinction be maintained, that the order of priests is a more special and a higher order before God, than the common order of Christians; because the priests alone receive the entire Sacrament or both elements, the body and the blood of Christ, and other Christians, as the body and the blood of Christ, and other Christians, as people of a lower order, must be satisfied with only one part of the Sacrament.

3. This difference they sought to introduce among the people by such a festival in order thus to praise their order above others, to the shame and disgrace of the holy Sacrament and our Lord Jesus Christ, who did not institute his holy Sacrament for a special order over and above the common order of Christians; just as he also did not suffer and die for a special order, but for the comfort Of his Christian church which is not divided, but consists of one body, of the one only Head, Jesus Christ, where all the members, so far as life and character are concerned, are equal; although their works are unequal and different.

4. This abuse, which is very great and harmful, we must not overlook, but picture it forth in its true colors, because the Papists insist with such hardened and impenitent hearts on their own godless conduct. For how does it happen that the holy Sacrament must be used to make a distinction among Christians? Whereas Christ our Lord instituted it chiefly for the comfort of the conscience and for the strengthening of our faith, and further that Christendom should be like a bond, by which Christians are bound together in the most intimate manner; that they be as one bread or one loaf, not only that they might have in common and at the same time one God, one Word, one Baptism, one Sacrament, one hope, one confidence, and all the grace and treasures of Christ in common; but that in their external life they are also one body, where one member assists, serves, helps, advises and sympathizes with the others.

5. This use of the holy Sacrament the Papists have thus entirely abolished, so that they alone have wholly taken the Sacrament to themselves, and thereby have formed an extra class that was to be better than common Christians. Yet, in order that the

common people might also highly esteem the one part of the Sacrament and not entirely despise it, they celebrated this festival every year for eight days, When they played with the one part, with the wafer, in a grand procession through the city and carried it about with cymbals and stringed instruments, so that they made the people stare with wonder, and made them think that even if the order of priests were grander and greater before God, yet, they too had something of which they could publicly boast.

6. For this purpose they used this Gospel lesson, although it agrees very poorly with the teaching of the Sacrament under one form. Just as though this master of the house had prepared a feast for mice, and only gave them something to eat and nothing to drink; and yet they themselves sing about it: Venite, comedite panem meum, Et Bibite vinum meum. Come, eat my bread, And drink my wine! And after all, they only gave them the one form, the bread, and kept the wine for themselves. But thus our dear Lord God is constantly treated; whatever he institutes and orders must be perverted and put to shame by the devil and his imps. Thus the Sacrament has also been treated, which on this festival even at the present day is still most horribly blasphemed by the Papists.

7. For as said before, they do not keep this feast in honor of the holy Sacrament, else they would bear in their processions both parts, and the entire Sacrament; but they do it to honor themselves, and they had to raise it high, not for our benefit, but only that we might know what the difference is between a priest and a lay member. In other things, where God has so created them, it is proper to observe the difference, for instance, that a woman is a woman, and a man a man, that worldly government must be distinguished from its subjects, and in like manner other worldly conditions. However, that men should here make a difference where God has put away all differences; that the Pope and bishops, yea, even St. Peter or St. Paul should have a better baptism or a better Gospel than any other common Christian is wrong. Therefore it is also wrong that they wish to have a better Sacrament than other Christians, for Christ our Lord and Savior, as already said, did not institute the Sacrament to make a difference among his Christians, but for the sake of equality, just as baptism and the Gospel, that we may have just as much from it as other persons.

8. This I desired to say briefly for the sake of the young, and also for our sakes, that everyone should learn to know the devil, and beware of the abominations which Popery has introduced, and has thus divided the Christian church which our Lord God has made one, while they condemn and persecute us because we will not allow ourselves to be made mice and rats who eat without drinking, or only receive the one

part. For this reason we in our church have altogether done away with this festival, because the Papists have made it nothing else but pure idolatry, and have gone straight against the order and institution of Christ, bringing disgrace to the holy Sacrament and a positive injury to Christianity. For we will remain with the unity of Christians, that one is as good as another, and all differences are here at an end. This is enough here for the sake of the young and the common people. We will now take up the Gospel lesson.

9. The occasion of this sermon by Christ was the miracle which the Lord Jesus Christ performed in the house of a Pharisee, when he healed one sick of the dropsy. But the Evangelist tells how they followed him and were on the watch for him, in order to catch him. Therefore, he also begins to lecture them, and tells them how they are filled with pride and vanity, and crowd into the highest seats, until he at length comes to the host, and reads a text also to him, how he should invite his guests; not the rich who can invite him again and thank him for it, but the poor, who may welcome him again in the life to come.

10. Following this address one of them who thought himself much more learned than Christ the Lord, begins to say: *“Oh, how blessed is he who eateth bread in the kingdom of God.”* As though he would say in his great wisdom: *You make yourself unprofitable enough by your preaching! If it would depend on preaching, I can do that, too, even better than you; for I consider this a truly great sermon: “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.”*

11. Christ replies to him: Yes, says he, I will tell you how blessed you and your comrades are: *“A certain man made a great supper, and bade many,”* and they despised it and would not come. This blow was meant for him. As though he would say: *You say much in the words, that he is a blessed man who eats bread in heaven! Oh, but you are in very great earnest! What an excellent holy man you are, namely, you are one of those who are invited and yet do not come. These are hard, sharp and terrible words when rightly considered; for he is speaking to real thorough-going rogues, who sat about the table, not because they wanted to learn anything, but in order to observe him closely to see by what means they might come to him and take him. To those he spoke this parable: “A certain man made a great supper.”*

12. This man who prepared this supper is our Lord God himself. He is a great and rich Lord, who also once prepared a feast according to his glorious majesty and honor, and it was such a supper which is called great and glorious not only on account of the host, who is God himself, for it would be a glorious supper if he had only given a vegetable

broth or a dry crust; yet the food is beyond all measure great and costly, namely, the holy Gospel, yea, Christ our Lord himself. He is himself the food, and is offered unto us through the Gospel, how he has made satisfaction by his death for our sins, and has redeemed us from all the misery of eternal death, of hell, of the wrath of God, sin and eternal condemnation.

13. This preaching of Christ is the great and glorious supper with which he feeds his guests and sanctifies them through his holy Baptism, and comforts and strengthens them through the Sacrament of his body and blood, that nothing may be wanting and a great plenty may be at hand and all become satisfied. Thus this supper is justly called a glorious, great supper on account of the fare and food, so costly and richly prepared that no tongue can describe it and no heart sufficiently grasp it. For it is an eternal food and an eternal drink, by partaking of which a man shall nevermore thirst nor hunger, but be forever satisfied, his thirst is quenched and he becomes joyful; and this not only for one man, but for the whole wide world, even if it were ten times wider, they would all have sufficient. For it is an inexhaustible food and an everlasting drink, as our Gospel says: He who believeth on this Lord Jesus Christ, that he was born for us of the Virgin Mary and crucified for our sins under Pontius Pilate, died, descended into hell, and rose again from the dead and sitteth at the right hand of God, etc.; he who believes this, eats and drinks truly from this supper. For to believe in Christ the Lord means to eat and to drink, from which the people become satisfied, fat and stout and strong, so that they are joyful forever.

14. This is rightly called a great supper, because it is so precious, and is offered to so many people that every one may eat until he is satisfied, and yet the food never becomes less. For it is such a great and strengthening food that it endures forever and gives eternal life, for it nourishes us differently than our mere bodily eating and drinking. If one has eaten and drunk enough to-day, he must still eat again to-morrow. But this is an eternal food and lasts forever. With this Christ gives those hypocrites at the table to understand that it is a different supper from what they had given him; and yet they are such rogues and knaves, that although they gossip and talk about it a great deal, yet they despise God and his mercy, eternal life and salvation, and hold everything else dearer. It follows further: *“And he bade many.”*

15. The many who are bidden are the Jews and all the people of Israel, who from Abraham on, and especially through the prophets had been invited. For to the patriarch Abraham the seed was promised through whom the blessing should come, and to him as the father of this people was this supper first announced. After that the prophets carried it further and directed the attention of the people to it, so that nothing was

wanting on the part of the Lord our God, and all were diligently invited. Therefore St. Paul in his Epistles everywhere tells the Jews: *Judaeis primum et Graecis*: To the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

16. Now when the hour came to go to the table, that is, when the time came for our Lord Christ to be born, to suffer and rise again from the dead, then the servants went out, John the Baptist and the Apostles, and said to those who were bidden, to the people of Israel: Dear people, hitherto you have been invited, now is the time to come, now the supper is ready! Your Lord Jesus Christ, your Messiah is already born, has died and rose again, therefore do not remain away any longer, come to the table, eat and be happy, that is, accept your promised treasure with joy, who has according to promise delivered you from the curse and condemnation and has saved you. And this message was brought especially to the leaders of the people, who held high places in the spiritual and civil governments. But what did they do with it?

“And they all with one consent began to make excuse.”

17. This was a lesson for those guests who sat with Christ at the table, and especially for the good-for-nothing babblers, who wanted to master Christ and preached much about the bread in the kingdom of God; blessed is the man who eats bread in the kingdom of heaven! Yes, Christ answers, do you want to know how blessed you are? I will tell you. The bread is now on the table and the supper prepared. John the Baptist was here, I and my Apostles invite you now to come to the supper; but you do not only stay away, you let the host sit at his great and glorious supper, but you even want to excuse yourselves and yet be pure. Hence it is a twofold sin, not only that you despise the Gospel, but even claim to be doing right, and to be even holy, pious and wise; this is a very grievous sin. It were already too wicked not to believe in the Word of God our Lord; but as they go further and despise it, and yet want to be just besides, is going entirely too far. As our young noblemen also do, who have disgraced and blasphemed the Sacrament and have given to us erring creatures only one part, and at the same time excuse themselves, and claim thereby to have done right. Yea, they also condemn us, and oppress us with all kinds of martyrdom, murder and drive away the people who truly desire to enjoy the whole Sacrament. But let them only pour out their rage hot enough, who knows, who will yet be compelled to sweat in this bath?

18. The Jews acted and excused themselves thus: Oh, we cannot accept the doctrine, for it is opposed to the priesthood and to the law, which God himself has given us through Moses. Besides it also creates divisions in our kingdom which God has confirmed. We must see how to maintain our own affairs! Thus the first one excuses

himself with his land, the second with his oxen, and both think they do well; the third does not even excuse himself at all, he simply refuses, and says he cannot come.

19. These are the excuses of the Jews as well as our own, which we prefer against the Gospel, for we are no better than they were. They first pretended that the law of Moses had to remain, and because the Apostles preached against the law, that neither their law, temple nor priests were necessary, for a greater priest was present, Jesus Christ, of the tribe of Judah; they would not tolerate such preaching, but held to their law as they still do. Thus it has come to pass that they still wait at the present day, and must wait until the last day for their Messiah to come, and they hope that he will prepare all things, the old priesthood anti kingdom as it was in the time of David, when he will give them everything in the greatest abundance.

20. For Christ here treats of these three parties. The first says: I want to see my farm. These are the foremost and best among them, among the Jews they were the entire priesthood and the chief rulers. These said: We priests must work, cultivate and harvest the land, that is, we must rule the people, and wait upon the priesthood God has entrusted unto us, as Christ also calls ministers cultivators of the soil who sow the Gospel. But as the teachings of the Apostles are opposed to this, it is wrong, and we are justly excused when we do not accept their doctrine.

21. Thus others also who had offices in the civil government excuse themselves with the oxen. For oxen are called the rulers of the people, Psalm 22:12: "Many bulls have encompassed me; strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round." These also have a fair excuse and say: We have a kingdom and government, instituted and appointed of God, with this we must remain and see to it how we may preserve it.

22. The third class say: The Gospel is a doctrine that will not allow covetousness, nor permit us to strive to have sufficient for our bodily needs, but commands us to risk everything, body and life, money and goods, for Christ's sake. Therefore we will and cannot come, for we must see how we may keep our own, which God has given us. For to take a wife is not to do or undertake anything dishonorable, but to enter an honorable state, and to be at home and plan how to support yourself, which is everyone's duty. But all this is just that by which an honest housefather commits sin, when he only thinks of this, how he may become rich, keep house well and prosper. God grant it whether it be done with or against God. For the Jews took into consideration only how Moses had promised them if they would be good and keep God's commandments, to give temporal blessings, cattle, lands, wife, child, and all things should be blessed and prosper. Therefore they only sought to have their cellars

and kitchens full, and to be rich, and then they thought that they were good, and that God had thus blessed them, as the Psalm says, Psalm 144:13-14.

23. Just in this very manner our Papists still excuse themselves and say: The doctrine is right, of course, but we must still adhere to the Church and her orderly government. Again, we must above all things maintain obedience to the worldly power, so that there may be no disturbance and insurrection. Thus they are troubled just like the Jews. If they would accept the Gospel, they fear they might lose their Church and government, whereas the Gospel alone builds up the true Christian church, and prevents all injustice, violence and insurrection. Besides covetousness is also present; since they see nothing in the Gospel but mere poverty and persecution, so that it goes as it does here, that they simply and without fear refuse to obey the Gospel and say, they have taken wives and cannot come, and still they want to be Christians and claim to have done just right, and want to be regarded as pious bishops, good princes and good citizens.

24. But how will it go with them? Just as it did with the Jews. They held so long to their law, priesthood, kingdom and treasures, until they at last went to destruction, and lost one after the other; so that now they dwell here and there and have their homes under foreign princes as if living in a swing. This is the reward for which they labored. For they desired not this supper, and preferred their kingdom, priesthood and houses, rather than the Gospel. Therefore they lost all three, and received the sentence that none of them should taste of this supper, and thus be deprived of both, of temporal things here on earth, and of the everlasting feast in heaven. The same will also certainly be the fate of our adversaries.

25. Thus Christ our Lord lectured this sharp doctor and his associates at the table, and showed them how they stood before our Lord God, namely, that God was angry at them, and would look out for other guests, as follows:

“Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servants, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in hither the poor, and maimed, and blind, and lame.”

26. As though he would say: Very well, inasmuch as this must be done, that you must examine your land and oxen and take unto you wives, and on this account neglect my supper, that is, you want your priesthood, kingdom and wealth, and will let me and my Gospel go, hence I will let you go, too, that on this account you will lose all, and I will provide me other guests. Therefore go forth, my servant, into the struts and lanes of the city and bring in hither the poor and crippled, the lame and blind. This was also done among the Jews. For as the great lords, princes and priests, and those who were

the best among the people would not accept the Gospel, for reasons already given, our God and Lord accepted the humble fishermen, the poor, miserable and despised little flock, as St. Paul also says, Corinthians 1:26-28: *“For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world that he might put to shame the things that are strong, and base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea, and the things that are not, that he might bring to naught the things that are.”*

27. According to this passage all that are wise, holy, rich and powerful, God has rejected, because they will not accept his Gospel; and the foolish, simple, and the most insignificant little lights, as Peter, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew and the like, who were poor fishermen and needy beggars, whom he here calls the poor, the maimed, the lame and blind, are chosen, whom no one would have considered worthy to be the servants of the priests and princes of the people. These were left like dregs, and as Isaiah says, the dregs of the good costly wine; the best among the people, the priests, the leaders, the rich and powerful are cast out as a vessel of good wine, and the dregs alone are left, which the Lord here calls the poor, the lame, the maimed and the blind. These are promoted to grace and honor, so that they become acceptable to God and dear guests, because the others, the high and great people will not come.

28. What the Pharisee now says: “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God”- to which Christ answers: Yes, blessed are they; but you and your followers are concerned about your farm and oxen. You speak of these things, therefore you shall know that a supper has been prepared, of which the poor shall eat, as the text says, Matthew 11:5, *Pauperes evangelizantur*, the poor have the Gospel preached to them. For the powerful, the saints, the wise do not want it, therefore it has come to pass that both priests and leaders have been cast away as the best wine, because they have held so firmly to their oxen, their land and their wives; and in their stead have been promoted the poor beggars, who came to the Gospel in this glorious supper.

29. This is to press the Jews very hard, and especially this one here, who wants to be wise and to eat bread in heaven, and yet he clings to his priesthood and kingdom, let Christ’ and his Gospel be what they may. For his heart is so constituted that he does not need Christ at all to make sure of heaven, but thinks our Lord God will say to him and all the Jews: Come, you Jews, and especially you priests, you saints, you princes, you fat citizens, for you the supper is prepared! Yes, says he, it is true, you are invited, but you care nothing for it and excuse yourselves and claim that you are right.

Therefore I cast you away, and accept rather the most humble people, even if I shall obtain no one but the despised, the poor, the maimed and the lame.

30. Thus it shall also be done to our adversaries, and nothing shall help them, though they be great, holy bishops, powerful princes and lords, and think that our Lord God will not thus cast them away, and accept only the poor rats' nest at Wittenberg, and the humble flock who love the Gospel. Yes, my dear friend, if God has cast away the best among his people who had such glorious and great promises, and took the dregs, neither will he give it to thee. Simply because you are great, holy and powerful, will not enable you to eat bread in heaven, for the poor have the Gospel preached to them. For our Lord is much greater, stronger, wiser and holier than all kings and all devils; therefore he cares but little about your holiness or power. And if you will still defy him and so wickedly despise his Word, he will then also rise up against you, so that all your wisdom, power and holiness will come to naught.

31. Thus far this Gospel lesson pertains only to the Jews; for Christ speaks of the lame and cripple who are found in the streets of the city. The people of the Jews are called a city, because they were a constituted and well ordered people, and had the law, the worship, the temple, the priests and 'king, all of which was ordained by God himself and established by Moses. Now he also sends his servant into the highways and commands him to take guests wherever he could find them, even the beggars along the hedges and everywhere. *"And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in that my house may be filled."*

32. This refers to us, the heathen, who have dwelt in no city, who were without any worship of the true God, but were idolatrous, and did not know what we or God were. Therefore our condition is properly called a free, open place on the highways, in the field, where the devil walks over us and has his quarters.

33. Go thither, he says, and constrain them to come in. For the world arrays itself against the Gospel in every way, and cannot tolerate this doctrine, and yet this housefather wants his house full of guests, for he himself has thus made preparations, and he now must have people to eat, drink and be joyful, even if he had to make them of stones.

34. Here we can also see that Christ our Lord suffers the world to stand so long for our sakes, although he would have sufficient reason, because of our sins to destroy it every moment. Yet he does not do this because he still desires more guests, and because of the elect who also belong to this supper. Now, because his servants bring

the precious Gospel to us, is an indication that we who are baptized and believe, also belong to this supper, for we are the great lords of the hedges, who are blind, poor and lost heathen.

35. But how shall we be constrained, as God does not want any forced worship? He constrains us by having the Gospel preached to all men: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Here he shows us both heaven and hell, death and life, wrath and grace, and reveals unto us our sins and ruined condition, so that we may be awakened on account of it, because we hear that a man as soon as he is born, naturally belongs to the devil and is condemned. This is part of this constraint, by which one is terrified at the wrath of God and desires grace and help from him.

36. When this has taken place by preaching and the hearts are thus stricken and awakened, he then desires that we should preach thus: Dear friend, do not despair because you are a sinner and have such a terrible sentence passed upon you; but do this, go forth and be baptized and hear the Gospel. Here you will learn that Jesus Christ has died for your sake, and has made satisfaction for your sins. If you believe this, then you will be safe against the wrath of God and eternal death, and you shall eat here at this glorious supper and live well, become hearty and strong.

37. This means rightly to constrain, namely, to terrify with sin, not as the Pope constrains with his ban. He does not properly awaken the conscience, because he does not teach what sin really is, but deals with his foolish work, saying, whoever does not observe his order and human tradition, shall be put under the ban. But the Gospel begins to reveal sin and the wrath of God from heaven, Romans 1, that we all live unrighteously and godlessly, without exception. This our Lord commands us to preach through the Gospel when he says to the Apostles: “Go forth and preach repentance.” But a man cannot preach repentance unless he declares that God is angry at all men, because they are full of unbelief, contempt of God and other sins.

38. This wrath must terrify them and make their consciences timid and fearful, that they constrain themselves and say: O, Lord God! what shall I ever do to be relieved from this distress? Now when man is terrified and feels his wretchedness and misery, then it is right to say to him: Sit down at the table of this rich Lord and eat, for there are yet many tables without guests and plenty to eat, that is, be baptized and believe in Jesus Christ, that he has made satisfaction for your sins. Otherwise, there are no means to aid you, except you be baptized and believe. Thus wrath will cease and heaven will shine with pure grace and mercy, forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

39. Therefore these words, “Constrain them to come in?” are for the poor, miserable multitude of those who are constrained, that is, especially we, who before were lost and condemned heathen, the lovely and comfortable from the masses, by which God desires to forcibly portray and show unto us his unfathomable grace. For it must ever be an unspeakable love, that he shows in these words that he is so desirous for our welfare and salvation, that he commands us not only friendly to call and encourage poor sinners to come to this supper, but also desires them to be urged and constrained, and that such urging is not to cease, that they may only come to his supper. By this he sufficiently shows that he will not cast them away or permit them to be lost, wherever they themselves will not only through malicious contempt and hardened impenitence oppose such efforts to constrain them. So that he is as Tauler said, immeasurably more anxious to give and help us, than we are or ever can be to receive or to pray, and demands and requires nothing more difficult from us, than that we should widely open our hearts and accept his grace.

40. This constraining, however, is necessary in preaching both repentance and forgiveness of sins; for without repentance we remain too hard and obdurate under his wrath, in our sinful nature and in the kingdom of the devil. And moreover, when the terror of divine wrath strikes us, we are again too fearful, modest and disturbed, to take this to heart and believe, that he will show us such great grace and mercy, and we are always full of anxiety that we do not belong to them, and that he will reject us because of our sins and great unworthiness. Therefore he must himself command and work that men continue and persevere evermore to constrain and urge as much as possible, both by holding forth wrath for the wicked and grace for the faithful. Wrath and repentance urge man to run and cry for grace. This is then the right way a person goes to this supper, and thus from Jews and Gentiles there will be one Christian church, and all will be called alike poor, miserable people, lame and crippled, for they accept the Gospel heartily and with joy.

41. Those, however, who will not do this, be they as wise and as shrewd as they please, receive this sentence, they shall not taste of this supper, that is, the wrath of God shall remain upon them and they shall be condemned on account of their unbelief. For here our Lord does not inquire, as before said, whether they be rich, wise or holy. Therefore, although they be already secure and think there is no danger, they will nevertheless experience, that this sentence will stand, when the Lord here concludes: Non gustabunt, “they shall not taste of my supper.” We, however, who accept it and with terrified hearts on account of our sins do not reject the grace of God which is made known to us in the Gospel through Christ and is offered to us, shall

receive grace instead of wrath; instead of sin, eternal righteousness; and instead of eternal death, eternal life.

42. In our time this terrible sentence, as we see, most powerfully goes forth against the Jews and the Turks, and no savor of the Gospel is left them; yea, it is to them a disgust and abomination, so that they can neither tolerate nor hear it. So are also our Popes and bishops, they shall not even smell this supper, not to say anything of their being filled with it. But we, who by God's peculiar grace have come to this doctrine, shall become hearty, strong and joyful by it, and at the table of this supper we are of good cheer. God grant that we may thus remain constant to the end! Amen.

43. Thus in this parable the Lord would admonish us to esteem the Gospel as dear and precious, and not hold to the crowd who think they are smart, wise, powerful and holy. For here stands the sentence: They shall be cast off and shall never taste of this supper; as among the Jewish people they have been cast off, and only the small dregs thereof remained. Thus it will also be with us, when we prefer our land, oxen, wives, that is, as it is at present called, spiritual or worldly honor along with temporal goods, to the Gospel.

44. He declares in simple, humble, short but very earnest words: "They shall not taste of my supper." As though he would say: Very well, my supper, too, is something, and what does it profit if it be better than their oxen, lands, homes and wives, when they now despise it, and regard their lands, oxen and homes, more precious? And when the hour shall come when they must forsake their oxen, lands and homes, then they would gladly also taste of my supper. But then, too, it shall be said: Dear friend, I am not at home at present, I cannot now wait on the guests, go forth to your lands, to your oxen, to your homes, they will, of course, afford you a better supper, because you have so securely and impudently despised my supper. Of course, I have cooked for you and let it cost me dear; this you have rejected with disdain. If now you have cooked better things, eat and be joyful, but you shall not taste of my supper.

45. This will be to them all a hard, terrible, and unbearable sentence, when he will call his supper everlasting life, and their lands, oxen and homes the everlasting fire of hell; and remain firm by this forever, that they shall not taste of his supper, that is, there shall be no more hope for them forever. For there neither repentance nor sorrow will avail, and from thence there shall be no return. Therefore these are exceedingly violent words, which show the great and endless wrath of the master of the house, for this is customary with great lords and high people, when they are real angry, they do not speak many words. But what they do say, every word weighs a hundred pounds, for

they intend to do more violently than they can express in words. How much more do those short words of the Almighty Lord signify an inexpressible wrath, which can never be reconciled.

46. Yet we act as though a fool or a child had spoken such hard, terrible words, at which we could laugh and make sport, or as though it were our Lord's jest and mockery, and neither hear nor see what the text plainly says, that he is angry, and has spoken this in great wrath; and that he is not a fool or a child, but the Lord and God over all things, before whom we justly tremble and are terrified, as the Scriptures say, the mountains with their base and foundation, and both the sea and the waters flee before him. But no creature is so hard and perverse as man, who has no fear whatever for anything, but despises and makes light of it.

47. But we are indeed sufficiently excused who say: This is our boast. For on that day the whole world must bear witness and confess that they have heard it from us, saw and experienced it, and it does not worry us if they condemn it as heresy. We will gladly bear it, that they call it heresy, and we hear it enough and beyond measure, and thank them kindly besides, that they cry it down as heresy. For thereby they always confess that they have certainly heard, seen and read it. I desire nothing more of them, for in that they confess that they have heard it, they testify that we have not been silent. If then we have not been silent, but have faithfully and diligently taught and preached this, so that our enemies themselves say that we have pressed it too hard, then let that man judge us, whom we hold has commanded us so to preach, and then let that god defend or condemn them, who urges them to condemn us. It shall be known in God's name, whose God is the true God, and whose Christ is the true Christ, and which church is the true Church. It shall be known when the snow disappears.

48. Although there can be no better government for this world than the devil's, or instead of the devil's, the government of the Pope, for this is what the world wants. What the devil wants goes forth and mightily prospers; what God wants both in the spiritual and worldly government, never succeeds and has innumerable hindrances, so that, if I could separate the world from the church, I would gladly assist to subject the world to the Pope and the devil. But Christ our Lord will do this and other things besides, and will keep his supper far enough from the world and the devil. Amen.

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